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[Elizabeth Vanderville Darby]

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W. W. Dixon,

Winnsboro, S. C. [?]/25/[?] trans 390569 ELIZABETH VANDERVILLE DARBY

(white) 84 YEARS OLD.

Elizabeth V. Darby lives with her half sister, Mrs. Edward D. Sloan, and her niece, Margaret Sloan, on the southwest corner of Vanderhorst and Moultrie Streets, in the town of Winnsboro, Fairfield County, South Carolina. She in vivacious, intelligent, a good talker, and an attentive listener. She is one of the interesting personalities of Winnsboro.

“It is quite a pleasure to see you again. I have been longing to see you and ask you about the particulars of the death of my friend, Bill Ellison. His death was so sudden. He was on the streets Saturday, cheerful and full of life, and early Sunday morning the news came that the silent angel of death had visited him and taken him away in a moment. And here I am old enough to be his mother and still living.

“How old am I? If I live to see the 24th of next September, I will be eighty-four years old. I was born fourteen miles from Wilmington, N. C., at Long Creek, a small post office place in New Hanover County, but the county has been changed to Pender County since then.

“My father was a physician and surgeon, Dr. S. S. Satchell; my mother, Elizabeth Vanderville Satchell, died when I was three years old. I was the only child by mother. When she died, father married Anne Moore. There were four children by this union, James, S. S., Jr., Paul, and Margaret. Margaret is the present Mrs. Sloan, with whom I make my home. Again my father was bereft of his wife, and he embarked in the last matrimonial adventure. This time he was joined in wedlock to Sarah Bell. He had one child by this 2 marriage, Quincy Bell Satchell.

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“My father was indulgent toward me as a child. I commenced to learn my A. B. C.'s at his knee. There were no public schools in North Carolina when I was a child; so, with the best of intentions, my father sent the necessary money to D. Appleton & Company, publisher and they sent him the blue-backed speller. He began teaching me the alphabet. The book ceased to be interesting to me, a child, after I had absorbed all the tales of the pictures in the front and back; pictures of the bear, the fox, the boy in the apple tree, and the vain girl, with the pail of milk on her head, going to market. In fact so tedious and tiresome became the ba (bay), bi (by), be (bee), and bo (bow), that one day father rode off to see a patient in the midst of a lesson, and I crept out to the well in the yard and threw the Yankee blue-book (as I called it) to the bottom of the well.

“Father gave up the task of teaching me and sent me to a private school, taught by a Mr. Richardson in Wilmington, N. C. Here I found the blue-backed speller again and went through it with just appreciation, as the dunce cap hung on a nail back of the teacher's chair and three hickory switches stood admonitory in the corner of the schoolroom, evident signs of compulsory education in that day and time.

“In my ninth year I was sent to the Moravian School, and it's a God's blessing I was. The school was in charge of a Mr. de Schweinitz. The teachers were kind in disposition, conscientious and thorough in their training, and the knowledge and wisdom I acquired there have been useful all my life. I remained at school until the end of the war.

“Anent that war, my father enlisted in the regular troops but was soon detached and placed in charge of one of the base hospitals as physician and surgeon. He was under General Ransome, brother to 'Mat' Ransome, who 3 became U. S. Senator after the war, that is when he first enlisted. The general's name was Robert Ransome.

“On the day the Yankees entered the town, the school bell was tolled for assemblage of the pupils in the chapel. We were, as a body, cautioned that our welfare and treatment by them would depend much on our decorum of respect and politeness toward them. The

first one who appeared was on horseback. He was alone; I remember his frying pan and cooking utensils were arranged about his saddle. Then two came and inquired about the location of the post office and disappeared.

“The next day many strolled and lolled about the school yard and promenade grounds. In a bevy of girls there always is a pert one or two. Some remarks of an ill nature passed between the girls and a young officer with more bravado than brains, perhaps, and he secured a U. S. flag and put it flying above the school building. The girls wanted it torn down, but Moravians are the kind of Christians who, in their meekness, submit to persecution. The flag remained flying until the Yankees departed.

“Our school ran out of tea, coffee, and sugar. The substitutes used were red sassafras roots for tea, which we liked; ground okra seed and ground parched corn for coffee, and molasses took the place of sugar.

“The Yankees did no burning or damage to property that I remember. In fact there was a good number of people in the locality who did not believe in secession and a few who thought slavery should be abolished.

“The next school I attended, for three years, was the convent school in Wilmington, N. C. Leaving here, I went to my mother's people, the Vandervilles, in New Jersey. They secured me a position to teach in the public school at Summerville, N. J. The school hours were from 9 a. m. to 4 p. m. with an hour's intermission for recess and dinner. I remained here until the 4 death of my father's second wife; then he had me to return home, keep house, and govern the four children, my younger brothers and sister.

“When my father married the third time, I went back to New Jersey and was governess in a home of four children until I married a prosperous young lawyer, Frank Darby. We were married nine years, but had no children. His mother got the bulk of his property. I consented to receive as my share, $3,700.00.

“Soon afterward, I secured a position as bookkeeper and cashier of Gailord & Co., in Wilmington, N. C. I studied stenography during my idle hours, and became the stenographer of Governor Russell of North Carolina in 1897. He was a Republican but a fine, nice gentleman. Afterward, I worked under my brother, Paul, in Washington in the employ of the [Sou. Ry.?] [Co.?] Next, I worked for my brother, S. S. Satchell, Jr., in Philadelphia, until General Otis went to the Phillipine Islands and the company sent my brother there. Following this, I lost all I had saved in a Building and Loan Association while acting as bookkeeper for a real estate and insurance operator, J. O. Reiley, in Wilmington, N. C.

“I next became housekeeper for Father J. A. Gallagher, a Roman Catholic priest, and remained in his household thirteen years, at Newbern, N. C. Then I came to Winnsboro in 1924 to my sister, Mrs. E. D. Sloan, and have resided with her family ever since.

“My brothers S. S., Jr., left the railway employment and obtained Government service in the Phillipines, and he was afterward on the Pacific coast in the service. He helped me until he died in the Presidio Hospital, out in California.

“On my mother's side I am descended from the first white child born in New Amsterdam. He was a de Rapalje child, and his father a de Rapalje built 5 the first house on Staten Island. When the English took charge of New Amsterdam, they changed the name to New York. You see that still leaves me a knickerbocker.

“Yes, I remember the firing on Fort Sumter, near Charleston, I was in my seventh year. General Beauregard had twice made a demand for its surrender, and the third time he told them that the 12th day of April would be the last day of grace. Everybody was solemn on that day, something like the expectancy of an impending total eclipse of sun, which I witnessed afterward in the late 90's. There was no playing on that day, but there was sad, anxious faces all around. News came that the fort had been fired on, and, soon afterward, war was declared. My father went out in Capt. Clingham's company, but he was soon

transferred into the hospital service. He didn't face any bullets afterward, but he had to meet smallpox and diseases which carried away as many soldiers as grape shot.

“As the war went along, the matter of women and girls' dresses received much attention. There was no new cloth available. Old dresses were changed, sometimes turned wrong side out or remodeled. Grown folks' clothes were re-cut and fashioned into girl's dresses, dyed, and retrimmed. The girls wanted to look fresh when the boys came home on furlough. Dyes and dye-stuff was a problem. Madder, copperas, barks, and roots were used to produce various shades of coloring. Designs were nearly impossible; stripes predominated. Economy had to be observed and considered. Well, the styles then were long dresses with trails. You must know that in those days it was the height of immodesty for a woman's ankle to be seen by a man; and a man never knew the color of his sweetheart's stockings until the night they got married. Dresses, before the war, required fourteen yards in the making. Women in those times wore shawls, each had an ambition to own and wear a cashmere shawl. They were 6 lovely things, costly in material and beautiful in delicate embroideries. One of the everlasting griefs to the womanhood of the South was the searching for and taking away of these shawls when the Yankees made their other depredations in their march through the Confederacy.

“I am an old woman now. I have played in the sunshine, walked underneath clouds, and trudged in the rains of troubles that seemed about to overwhelm me, but I have come out of it all, chastened and resigned to the will of our Heavenly Father.

“The first of next month I'll make my annual visit of three weeks to the Convent of the Sacred Heart, at Belmont, N. C. I shall be very glad to send you a postcard after my arrival, and it will please me to hear from you and my friends in Winnsboro occasionally while there.”